

National Canners Association

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Information
Letter



For N. C. A.
Members

Membership Letter No. 39.

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Canners Quickly Grasp Merits of Warehouse Plan for Handling Swells.

Those canners who have had an opportunity to examine the warehouse plan for handling swells, recently adopted by the National Canners Association at Chicago, have been quick to grasp its merits. The Western Canners Association, the Northwest Canners Association, the Canners League of California, and the Association of Hawaiian Pineapple Canners, have already approved the plan. The same undoubtedly will be true with other state associations, when the plan is explained to them. It seems to be merely a matter of proper presentation and explanation. Accordingly, every effort is being made to reach the individual canner.

It is not particularly surprising that there should be general support of the warehouse plan, for it is obvious that a flat allowance or trade discount in lieu of payment for actual swells would be wrong in principle. It would create an incentive for a canner to be careless or wilfully indifferent about sorting out swells before shipment and so might simply lead to demands for an increased allowance. It would penalize the careful, progressive canner.

The three plans which have been considered for handling this question are (a) Canned foods to be accepted or rejected by buyer on arrival and no refund to be made for swells, except in the case of excessive spoilage. (b) A flat or graduated allowance for swells, to be made on all invoices, and (c) The warehouse plan. The last named appears to be fair to all parties concerned, and insures the destruction of the spoiled foods. It would appear, under this plan, the canner is guaranteeing his products one hundred per cent. against trouble and insuring himself against the destruction of those that are not spoiled.

Then, too, as one of the most prominent canners in the country aptly pointed out, there is tremendous educational value to the warehouse plan, in that canners, distributors, and food officials, as well as chemists of the Research Laboratory, will thus be given an opportunity to inform themselves regarding spoilage and other abnormal conditions occurring in canned foods. Food and health

officials will particularly welcome this from their standpoint. This feature alone would seem to be well worth the comparatively small cost of the undertaking.

Sentiment Among Distributors Divided.

A small but influential group of wholesalers has complained that canners are arbitrary in the swells matter. They say that canners have made up their minds to this policy, and are trying to force it upon the wholesalers. This is unfair. We are not asking anything new. We are contending that the old contract is fair and right. The only change we suggest is that the goods which the canner formerly stipulated should be returned to him, may now be returned to certain regional warehouses, usually located nearer the distributor, and therefore more convenient to him than to the canner. Certain distributors, on the other hand, demand a fundamental change in the contract. They are trying to force it upon the canning industry, notwithstanding the fact that it is totally unfair.

On the other hand, those members of the American Wholesale Grocers Association Conference Committee who were at the Western Canners Association meeting in Chicago on November 7th went on record as favorable to the principle of the plan and pledged themselves to submit the plan to the entire membership of their conference committee for approval, rejection, or suggestions for modification.

So far as the canner is concerned, the essential thing for him is to be thoroughly informed, for it is a fact that several canners came to the Board meeting opposed to the plan, and were favorable to it after they had heard it explained. Therefore, if there is any reader of this letter who has not received his copy of the plan, or if he knows of any other canner, member or non-member of the Association, who has not had a copy, a statement of that fact will be appreciated.

A bulletin covering the plan will soon be printed and sent to all canners, distributors, and food officials.

Plenty of Pep at National Canned Foods Week Meeting.

Fore!

Be on the lookout for the 1924 Canned Foods Week pledge card. The committee, headed by Royal F. Clark, had a splendid meeting at Chicago and is now actively seeking pledges.

A card goes forward this week to every canner who has not yet subscribed and it is earnestly hoped this card will be signed and returned at the earliest possible time.

He Hates to Take the Money.

A well-known member of the N.C.A. Board writes, as follows:

"Enclosed please find memo covering the expense connected with the meeting of the Board of Directors in Chicago. There is really no need for sending it in, for the inspiration that a person gets is well worth it."

Tomato Improvement Campaign to be Continued in Tri-States.
Virginia Actively Interested.

Agricultural extension leaders and county agricultural agents from all the principal tomato growing counties of Maryland decided at a conference held

at Baltimore recently, to continue the tomato improvement campaign during 1924. The conference was called at the suggestion of the Raw Products Bureau of the National Cannery Association for the purpose of checking up results of the tomato improvement work and making plans for 1924. Representatives were present from each of the Tri-States, while Virginia sent several county agents and extension leaders to learn the details of the Maryland work in order to put on a similar campaign for improvement in production in the Old Dominion.

Each county agent present summarized the results secured during the past season community plant bed demonstrations. This work has again demonstrated the increased yield and quality obtainable through the use of better-bred seed, improved plant growing methods, and more efficient use of fertilizers.

While the unfavorable season interfered with the success of a few of the thirty-five plant beds operated, the same conditions caused more extensive losses of growers' plants. If it had not been for the community plant beds, many hundreds of growers would have been unable to secure plants early enough to make a crop.

In Talbot County, the report showed that many growers who obtained the superior plants from the community beds had yields fifty per cent. greater than growers who used plants produced in the ordinary way. In Somerset County, the demonstrations next year will include the use of muslin-covered frames for growing tomato plants. A few growers used plants grown under this method during the past season, and extended the bearing season so that the yield ran over nine tons per acre. In Worcester County, the county agricultural agent reported that canners state that they had never before had such a high quality of tomatoes delivered to the canneries. In Dorchester County, the community plant beds were entirely successful in each case where instructions had been implicitly followed.

In Harford County, the report showed that spraying or dusting the tomato plants in the seed bed was general in the county for the first time. One large canner reported yields in his territory from plant bed plants of one hundred and twenty-five bushels per acre above the preceding year's average. In Kent County, although the community plant bed was seriously injured by heavy rains, it later produced plants which were said by a plant grower of thirty years experience to be the finest he had ever seen. Yields averaged from two to four and one-half tons more per acre from the plant bed plants than from plants from other sources.

The research work of the Agricultural College on protection of plants from disease and insect attack, will be continued next year, with special reference to prevention of infection of plants in the seed. The Virginia representatives left the conference fully prepared to put on an active campaign of demonstrations in several of the more important tomato-producing counties in Virginia another season.

Prominent British Official Studies Industry.

Dr. Gerald Leighton, Medical Officer of the Scottish Board of Health, has recently visited this country. He was familiar with the work of our research laboratories and has been anxious to get first hand information regarding the canning industry. The Association was able to arrange for him to visit a number of canneries in operation and before returning to Scotland he expressed himself very enthusiastically about the canning industry in this country, and was grateful for the opportunity to study it afforded by the Association.

1923 Tomato Pack Statistics.

Statistical blanks have gone forward to tomato canners from the National Canners Association, seeking statistics regarding the 1923 tomato pack. Inasmuch as the Association is anxious to give out these figures at the earliest possible date, a prompt response is requested.

Canned Foods Again Unjustly Blamed.

Two newspapers in the East recently published a report of an outbreak of "ptomaine poisoning" in a convent, involving seven women, and stated the poisoning was believed to have been due to canned food.

Upon investigation by this Association, and interviews with the attending physicians, we find that the latter never attributed the illness to canned foods, and it was found that no canned foods whatever had been eaten at the suspected meal.

In another case which the Association investigated, it developed that a young lady who had been treated for "ptomaine poisoning" had in reality swallowed poison in an attempt to kill herself. It seemed that the unfortunate girl had gone to a large city, and, having failed to win success, rather than return to her home in the country, had decided upon suicide. Nevertheless, the case was, as usual, attributed to "ptomaine poisoning".

Can Prices Probably Increased.

We are informed the American Sheet & Tin Plate Company have opened their books for tin plate orders for the first quarter of 1924 at a price of \$5.50 per base box, which has been the official price since April 26, 1923, and this announcement is generally taken to mean that the official price of tin plate on January 1, 1924 will be \$5.50 per base box. Can prices will probably be increased accordingly to cover the increase in the tin plate price, amounting to 75 cents a box over the price in effect in Canners' contracts this year. This increase will be as follows:

No. 1 Cans.....	\$1.37	per 1000
No. 2 "	2.03	" "
No. 2½ "	2.55	" "
No. 3 "	2.85	" "
No. 10 "	5.63	" "

In terms per dozen cans, which is the familiar basis of consideration by Canners, the increase is as follows:

No. 1 Cans.....	1.64	cents per dozen
No. 2 "	2.44	" " "
No. 2½ "	3.06	" " "
No. 3 "	3.42	" " "
No. 10 "	6.76	" " "

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